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SUBJECT: Santiago Feb. 25 Media Report

Lead Story

¶1. All dailies (2/25) report that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will arrive in Santiago next week to meet with President Bachelet and President-elect Pinera and that she would not attend Pinera's swearing-in on March 11. Only government-owned La Nacion reported differently saying that the Secretary "might" be at the swearing-in "if she can adjust her agenda to be away from her country ten days."

Secretary Clinton's Visit

¶2. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will be the first high-ranking U.S. official to meet with president-elect Pinera. Assistant Secretary Philip Crowley said that the secretary would arrive to Chile next Monday and leave on the 2nd. She would not, therefore, attend Pinera's swearing-in. In 2005, the White House sent Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Bachelet's swearing-in. This would be Clinton's fourth visit to Chile, although the first as Secretary of State. She traveled before as First Lady (Conservative, independent La Tercera, 2/25).

IPR

¶3. The International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA) has been very influential over the past years on what countries should be included in the United States Trade Representative's list of countries that need to improve on IPR. In its most recent report, the IIPA says that Chile implemented new yet "inadequate" legislation and underscores the high levels of piracy that still exist, and recommends the USTR to keep Chile on its Priority Watch List another year. Although Chile was the first Ibero-American country to sign an FTA with the United States almost six year ago, it has not fully complied with the agreement with regard to IPR, says the IIPA (El Mercurio, La Tercera, 2/25).

Pinera Administration

¶4. UDI party Congressman Dario Paya will be Pinera's Communications Director (El Mercurio, 2/25).

¶5. At the Rio Group, President Hugo Chavez said that "God willing," he would attend Pinera's swearing-in on March 11. A Cuban delegation will also attend. Pinera and Chavez have already had an exchange of harsh remarks. A Chavez visit could attract major media interest, as would Raul Castro's eventual attendance (Government-owned, La Nacion, 2/25).

OAS

¶6. In spite of the controversial relationship that Hugo Chavez has had with the OAS since Jose Miguel Insulza took office, the Venezuelan president told Insulza yesterday at an informal gathering that he would endorse his candidacy for another term in the OAS. This means that Insulza already has 23 votes of a total 33 to be reelected. Reportedly, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega also expressed his support for Insulza's reelection. The United States, Mexico, and Peru are among the countries that have not yet officially revealed their vote (La Tercera, El Mercurio, 2/25).

Rio Group Summit- New Regional Bloc

¶7. The Rio Group countries reached a consensus to create a new regional organization to promote regional integration and to present one voice in global forums. The new organization excludes the United States and Canada. U.S. Department of State spokesperson Philip Crowley said that the United States maintains good relations with the majority of Latin American and Caribbean nations and that, therefore, sees no problem with the new project approved in Cancun. He added that it is good for countries to find ways to cooperate more effectively. Assistant Secretary Arturo Valenzuela said that these initiatives are important, because they give confidence and provide mechanisms to resolve conflicts in the region (El Mercurio, 2/24).

¶8. Presidents Hugo Chavez and Raul Castro not only strongly favor the exclusion of the United States from the creation of a new regional block; they also want to dissolve the OAS. With regard to the latter, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Arturo Valenzuela said, "There is consensus that the OAS has a historical importance and it must therefore be strengthened. We must not look down on the work it does" (El Mercurio, 2/24).

Other

¶9. 80-year old American Duncan Buchanan died from a heart attack after his plane landed in Chile. He was taken to the airport's emergency unit for reanimation, but died at 7:10 a.m. (All dailies, 2/24).
SIMONS